



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR.
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
1-800-368-8808 or 304-558-8986

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attorney General McGraw Settles With DishNetwork; Company to Modify Business Practices, Provide Refunds

Attorney General Darrell V. McGraw announced today that his office has reached a settlement with DISH Network, one of the nation's largest home satellite TV providers. The agreement, which resulted from a joint effort by consumer protection officials in 46 states, requires substantial robust changes in the company's business practices and offers refunds for affected consumers.

Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Protection Division has received hundreds of complaints against DISH relating to billing problems, service issues, and serious allegations of deceptive advertising. Consumers complained that DISH offered handsome discounts for large programming packages if the consumers signed contracts for one or two years of home satellite service; once equipment was installed, however, DISH raised prices without warning or cancelled certain channels without notice. In many cases, complainants alleged that DISH charged consumers' credit cards or made electronic bank withdrawals without their authorization. When consumers tried to cancel their service, DISH often responded with demands for steep early termination fees.

DISH often responded to complaints by blaming its third party retailers, claiming that they were distinct companies whose conduct was not DISH's responsibility. DISH made this claim despite evidence that DISH's contracts with local vendors gave the company significant control over the retailers' conduct and operations.

The settlement requires significant changes in the business practices of DISH. Advertisements must reflect accurate prices and channel availability, and DISH representatives must fully explain all terms and conditions of its contracts in plain English to each consumer, both orally and in writing. If prices increase or if a change occurs in programming, DISH must offer an opportunity to cancel the satellite TV service without obligation. The company must also follow strict guidelines regarding credit card charges and electronic bank withdrawals, and resolve customer service issues in a timely fashion. According to the agreement, DISH will resolve existing complaints and provide remedies to consumers who file new complaints within the next 150 days, as well as pay \$125,000.00 towards consumer education.

Consumers who would like to file a complaint are encouraged to call Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-368-8808 or 304-558-8986. Consumers may also write to Post Office Box 1789, Charleston, WV 25326-1789, e-mail at consumer@wvago.gov, or visit the Attorney General's website at www.wvago.gov.

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